

# From *Discovering* to *Dreaming*: Discovery Themes and Culture Change Dreams at Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care

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## Culture Change in Long-term Care (LTC) Homes

Culture change relating to care provision has received considerable attention in recent years, particularly within the long-term care (LTC) sector (e.g., Baker, 2007; Fagan, 2003; Hill, Kolanowski, Milone-Nuzzo & Yevchuk, 2011; Misorski & Rader, 2010; Pioneer Network, 2013; Thomas, 2003). Culture change in LTC homes usually involves a shift from the medical, institutional model of care towards a relational, community model of living. A relational, community model of living emphasizes the values of choice and self-determination; dignity and respect; the nurturance of mind, body and spirit; personhood; close interdependent relationships, collaborative decision-making; purposeful living; and enabling, normalizing environments (Fagan, 2003; Hill et al., 2011). In creating this shift, culture change processes encourage the meaningful participation of residents, families, and staff in decision-making about care.

The Partnerships in Dementia Care (PiDC) Alliance, Yee Hong Centre for Geriatric Care in Markham, ON, and its stakeholders are engaged in a participatory process of culture change to improve dementia care. The process is led by a Culture Change Coalition (CCC) composed of residents, family members, staff, and co-researchers and uses an appreciative inquiry (AI) approach. The objectives of this presentation are to describe: (1) our collaborative methods in developing *Discovery* themes; (2) how we transitioned from *Discovery* themes to *Dreaming* alternative futures; and (3) our collective *Dreams* and aspiration statements.

## Methods

Residents, staff, family members, and community partners were asked in the second phase of the AI process to *Discover* the strengths of their organization. This was accomplished through surveys, focus groups, and interviews. In the third phase of the AI process - *Dream* - the CCC dreamed what *could* be. The CCC collaboratively analyzed *Discovery* and *Dream* data using thematic analysis.



## Transitioning from Discovering to Dreaming

The purpose of the discovery phase is to understand what gives life to an organization when it is at its best. Information gathered from *Discovery* propels the culture change process forward by enabling our CCC to build *Dreams* and aspiration statements from strengths identified through the discovery process. When CCCs are proud of their accomplishments, it sets the stage for reflective and synergistic thinking of an ideal future (or *Dreams*) occurring “outside the box.”

## Discovery Themes: Appreciating Yee Hong's Strengths

*Discovery* energizes a team as it asks CCCs to reflect on appreciative stories described by residents, staff, family members, and community members. The CCC at Yee Hong identified five *Discovery* themes.

**Honouring Culture and Diversity.** We excel at honouring culture and diversity by *welcoming all cultural and ethnic backgrounds; embracing the importance of celebration; and appreciating food.*

**Trusting in Accountable & Responsive Leadership.** Yee Hong's leadership are progressive, honest, sincere, and action-oriented, especially when concerns or requests are raised. Further, we feel Yee Hong's strength in leadership can be attributed to being willing to go “above and beyond” by “seek[ing] out new methods in long-term care,” engaging stakeholders, and making them feel connected to what is happening at Yee Hong.

**Going the Extra Mile to Better Resident Care.** Yee Hong's excellence in resident care is made possible by *providing reliable, flexible, and dedicated care; focusing on responsive, resident-centred care; and nurturing loving, attentive and compassionate care relationships with residents.* By going the extra mile in support of better resident care, stakeholders of Yee Hong are *championing a strong reputation for excellence in quality of care.*

**Recognizing and Showing Appreciation of All Stakeholders.** We are *maintaining a respectful and safe atmosphere* in our living and working spaces and continue *being proud of all contributions* that take place at Yee Hong.

**Ensuring Yee Hong “Feels like Home”.** We are focused on *having engaging, meaningful and inclusive activities and social experiences for everyone; ensuring everyone feels comfortable and relaxed; fostering strong connections; working together; committing to open communication; and keeping a clean, safe, spacious and accessible environment.*

## Culture Change Dreams

When *Discovery* is done thoroughly, the *dream* phase moves quickly. The *Dream* phase involves boundless brainstorming about an ideal future. Through the collective discussion and decision-making, the work of the CCC at Yee Hong yielded carefully crafted aspiration statements -- or guideposts to realizing our dreams -- from the many *Dreams* contributed by various stakeholders.

## Overarching Culture Change Philosophy at Yee Hong

**By building strong partnerships; creating awareness; building capacity; and focusing on experiences, strengths, dreams, and aspirations with residents, staff, family members, community members, volunteers, and donors as partners in care, we can make changes to improve quality of life for everyone at Yee Hong.**



## Aspiration Statements as Guideposts for the Future

**Dream:** Expand education and training opportunities; build community awareness; and enhance communication for staff, residents, and family members

**Aspiration Statement 1:** At Yee Hong we are committed to fostering accessible and inclusive education, trusting relationships, and supportive partnerships with all partners in care.

**Dream:** Creating more of a home-like environment (including food, recreation, and leisure)

**Aspiration Statement 2:** Yee Hong is a place where everyone can enjoy life to their fullest in a fun, safe, flexible home-like environment, where choices are honoured and respected.

**Dream:** Exploring ways to include others to support residents/increased staffing/flexible staffing options

**Aspiration Statement 3:** At Yee Hong we are dedicated to engaging partners in care in supporting staff to provide all residents with consistent quality care.

**Dream:** Expand on-site health and wellness services available, and continue to ensure everyone's safety

**Aspiration Statement 4:** Yee Hong and its partners in care are dedicated to promoting holistic services that enhance the safety, health and wellness of its community.

## Designing a LTC Home Future

Using the aspiration statements as guideposts, the CCC at Yee Hong have begun to plan in the fourth phase of AI - Design - where the CCC will realize how their aspirations statements can be put into action (through Yee Hong's organization-wide strategic plan, community-level knowledge translation, and the development of culture change indicators, for example) to improve the future of dementia care at Yee Hong.

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